DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 294 584 IR 052 367

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TITLE Reference Procedures Manual and Reference Policies Manual.
INSTITUTION Northern Michigan Univ., Marquette. Univ. Libraries.
PUB DATE Feb 88
NOTE 30p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Libraries; Higher Education; *Library Services; *Reference Services
IDENTIFIERS *Library Procedures

ABSTRACT

This reference procedures manual for the Northern Michigan University Library covers: (1) desk service, including handling inquiries, recording statistics, problems, responsibility of assistants, referrals, user assistance with the public access catalog, and reference collections; (2) photocopying; (3) database searching; (4) bibliographic services; (5) library instruction and orientation; (6) databases on CD-ROM; (7) term paper counseling; (8) reference correspondence; (9) reference schedule; (10) evaluation of reference services; (11) checking out reference materials; (12) use of the library classroom; (13) ordering reference books; (14) interlibrary loan; and (15) courtesy cards. Guidelines on library emergency procedures are appended. The accompanying policies manual discusses hours and scope of service, users, reference priorities, library instruction, and the reference collection. (MES)

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OLSON LIBRARY
NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

REFERENCE PROCEDURES MANUAL

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FEBRUARY 1988

IR053367

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A. General Statement and Instructions

Nature and Extent of Responsibilities of Librarians on Desk Duty

The primary responsibility of Reference staff on desk duty is provision of direct personal service to users who come to the Information Desk for assistance, or call by telephone.

Reference staff are responsible for reading the messages written in the "Reference Updates" folder as soon as they come on duty. The purpose of this folder is to record information and special short-term instructions needed by staff on desk duty that day.

Messages should be added to this folder by staff on desk duty as appropriate. Examples of such messages are: notes concerning materials placed on the Reference hold shelf for use by patrons returning later in the day; notes concerning class assignments involving use of reference materials; notes concerning procedures for answering a difficult question being asked repeatedly at the desk.

Approachability

Reference staff on desk duty must be constantly aware of how approachable they appear to users who are in need of information. Being approachable is a first step in encouraging users to seek assistance at the desk. Users need to be educated to the fact that individual assistance is the primary responsibility of staff on desk duty, that Reference Librarians are interested in the problems that face library users and are willing to help. Since the attitude and behavior of staff on duty go a long way towards creating an image of the Reference Department, Reference staff should strive to make that image a positive one. Reference staff should also be aware of users who need help but are hesitant to ask for aid or don't know they may request it. Staff must be careful not to become so engrossed in other work that they fail to see users in need of assistance.

Slack Periods

During slack periods at the desk, staff may work on other assignments, examine new reference materials, read professional literature, prepare orientation sessions, etc. as long as it does not interfere with the provision of desk service.

Leaving the Desk Uncovered

Should it become necessary to leave the desk uncovered for more than a few minutes, the sign which reads "Reference Librarian will return at" should be placed in a visible location on the desk. A librarian's absence from the desk should never be so prolonged as to interfere with the rights of others who are waiting for service.

B. Handling General Inquiries

General Statement

It is expected that judgment will be used in determining which questions can be handled to completion by the librarian and which ones are best answered by providing guidance in selecting sources to consult. In the first category are directions, general questions concerning library services and policies, information on library holdings, and ready reference questions involving specific facts easily determined from standard sources.

Directions

In giving directions, explanations should be given when possible with reference to appropriate printed aids available near the Information Desk or public catalog so that the explanation will be as clear as possible and the user can, if he/she wishes, find his/her own way the next time there is a similar question.

Library Holdings

In giving information on library holdings, the Reference Librarian should never give a negative answer without fully verifying the item requested and checking in all appropriate collections or sources. If the user does not want to wait until this can be done or is satisfied with a less than complete search, be sure to indicate in your answer that it is possible that a more thorough search would locate the material wanted.

When it is established that material needed by the user is not available in Olson Library, suggestions should be made concerning other possible locations which may be appropriate.

Information Service

Answers to other questions should be based on data in standard reference sources whenever possible. The printed information should be shown to the user or, in the case of a telephone inquiry, the sources of the information should be cited.

Normally, Reference staff will not vouch for the accuracy of a particular answer or source, although staff should be prepared to give some indication of its reliability. Answers will not normally be cross-verified except in the case of obvious discrepancies.

Research and/or Instruction

In a second category are questions which require much longer, more detailed answers, e.g. questions concerning search strategy for information in a specific field, perhaps involving several forms of material or a number of specialized sources, or assistance in using specialized reference sources such as CD-ROM.

When these more complicated, time-consuming questions arise at the desk, there are several possible procedures to follow. These include alerting an "on call" librarian or reference assistant to take your place at the desk, or asking an "on call" librarian to answer the question, or informing the user that if he/she is willing to come back later, individual help in locating the answer will be provided.

Amount of Service

The amount of service that can be given at any particular time will vary, depending on such factors as how busy it is at the desk, how many other Reference Librarians are available to help, etc. What is practical at one time may not be at another. It is important, however, that an effort be made to provide adequate service. Some guidelines to follow are:

--always try to suggest some source and specific headings (in the public catalog, an appropriate index or bibliography, etc.) and encourage the user to return for further suggestions if the results are unsatisfactory.

--if the user is beginning his/her search and is unfamiliar with the relevant sources, the librarian may want to suggest that he/she make an appointment with a Reference Librarian for a conference on how to make full use of library resources in that field.

--if the librarian is unfamiliar with what sources might be available and wishes to investigate when he/she has more time, fill out a Request for Information form and arrange to report on the question later.

--when likely sources of information are known but a search of them will be very time-consuming, or require specialized knowledge which the librarian does not have, suggest that the user do the searching.

Instruction

Formal instruction in the use of the public catalog, bibliographic tools, and the Reference collection should be a routine part of Reference service. Encourage the user to follow your steps as you seek out information or sources, but never force instruction on a user who asks a simple question that can be answered by reference to one or two sources.

Reference Librarians should be alert to questions that indicate a need for library instruction. In general, these will fall into three main categories: occasions when a student is looking for materials for a paper, speech, or other project; when a user is investigating a topic exhaustively; and when a user seems unfamiliar with the use of a particular reference tool and indicates an interest in learning how to use it effectively.

Reference Librarians should also be alert to questions indicative of class assignments where formal library instruction for the entire class would be more fruitful than answering individual questions at the desk. If possible, attempt to determine the nature of the assignment, the due date, and the name of the instructor. This information should be referred to the Library Instruction Librarian, who will judge whether the instructor should be contacted.

C. Handling Problem Inquiries

Questions Received at End of Day

Whenever possible, handle questions received at the end of the day to completion, even if this means working beyond a scheduled period. However, if the question seems very involved, or you have other commitments which prevent working beyond a certain time, ask the user to fill out a Request for Information form, so that

you or another Reference Librarian will be handle the question at a more appropriate time.

Questions Related to Take-Home Exams, Contests, Puzzles, Etc.

Challenging questions are sometimes posed by instructors as part of take-home examinations or as "puzzles" intended to encourage students to learn how to use library resources. The initial approach of the librarian should be the same as it would be to any other questions. However, when a group is involved in pursuit of the same information, the reference staff must judge the relative importance or propriety of the question and act accordingly to avoid time-consuming repetition of effort.

Recommending Reference Books for Purchase

If a user asks a Reference Librarian to recommend an encyclopedia, dictionary, or other reference work for purchase, an opinion may be given on the reputation of a specific work, but the opinion should always be supported by a review or comment in a standard reference source, such as Dictionary Buying Guide, Encyclopedia Buying Guide, or ARBA. The user should always be advised to examine the library's copy to see if it meets individual needs or expectations.

D. Recording Statistics and Questions

Daily Statistics Report

The Reference Department keeps statistics on inquiries received at the desk in order to provide a factual basis for review of reference services. One of the duties of all librarians and Reference Assistants scheduled for desk work is to keep an accurate record of inquiries received.

Record each reference question in the proper time slot on the dated slip on the Information Desk. Notice that directional questions are also recorded, along with special assistance to those using microforms or documents. At the close of each day, place the statistics form on the Reference Secretary's desk. These statistics are compiled at the end of each month and recorded on the tally for Public Services' annual report.

Request for Information Sheet

It is the responsibility of staff assigned desk work to record questions they are unable to answer while on desk duty. The purpose of recording these questions is twofold: (1) to have a record of unanswered questions to be worked on at a later time, when there is more time to search and/or ask for assistance from others; (2) and to record questions that could not be answered with library resources (specific titles and/or types of materials which should be added to the collection to answer similar questions in the future should be noted on the form).

E. Emergencies, Problems, Complaints

Emergencies

For emergencies, refer to the Library's Emergency Policy (attached as an Appendix). All other problems not listed in this Emergency Policy should be

referred to the Head of Public Services, or the Library Office. Users reporting problems in the Curriculum Media Center or Government Documents should be referred to the appropriate librarian.

Lost and Found

Lost items should be delivered to the Circulation Desk as soon as discovered. Inquiries about lost items should also be referred to Circulation.

Noisy Users in Reference

If users are discussing their work in the Reference area, ask them to work together in a conference room. If their conversation is purely social or their behavior disruptive, ask them to leave the library. If the problem persists, consult the procedures in the Emergency Policy.

Missing Reference Books

Temporarily missing reference books should be reported by filling out a search card for the missing title and giving it to a Reference Assistant. Books not located after being searched in the stacks will be given to Circulation for further searching.

Shelf-Reading

Since disorders in book arrangement can cause serious inconvenience to users, the Reference staff should pay continuous attention to maintaining the collection in good working order. The shelving and shelf-reading of Reference materials is the responsibility of Reference Assistants; however, when there is a temporary pile-up of heavily used materials and a Reference Assistant is not available to reshelve them, the librarian on duty should keep the collection in good working order, reshelving the books as necessary.

Public Catalog and Periodical Printout Corrections

If mistakes or omissions are noted in the public catalog or periodicals printout, they should be reported to the appropriate department in Technical Services.

Complaints

Complaints concerning policies or functions of the Reference Department should be discussed with other members of the Reference staff and reported to the Head of Public Services, or the Library Director if the Head of Public Services is not available.

F. Responsibilities of Reference Assistants

General Statement

Reference Assistants receive in-service training to prepare them for carrying out a variety of support activities essential to maintaining the quality of reference services. They are expected to provide back-up assistance for routine problems, procedures, and questions, helping users locate desired microforms, preparing reference guides, etc. They may also be called upon to help individual Reference Librarians by checking sources for answers to specific

reference questions. They also have the responsibility of keeping the department in order and shelving all reference materials.

In addition, they may be called upon during peak service periods to assist more directly by answering the telephone, or handling short-answer questions. For a list of general support activities assigned to individual assistants, see the folder labeled "Reference Assistants" in the Reference office.

Levels of Responsibility

Reference Assistants should be able to answer simple questions on their own, but they should refer complicated or difficult questions to a librarian.

Assistants share with other members of the Reference staff a responsibility for becoming familiar with the contents of this manual.

G. Telephone Inquiries

General Statement

The telephone is one of the most important means of providing and arranging for service to library users. Members of the Reference Department are responsible for maintaining the best possible standards of telephone service.

Effective Telephone Reference

Develop a pleasing telephone manner--make the caller's first impression a good one. Identify the department--so that the caller knows immediately that he/she has reached the right department, answer the phone by saying "Olson Library, Reference." Give personal service--treat callers as individuals. Also, do not leave a person on hold for more than a few minutes while searching for an answer. If a search will take more than a few minutes. arrange to call the person back or have the person call back at a specified time.

Leave effective messages--when the call is for someone in the department who cannot be reached immediately, always offer to take a message. Make it clear, concise, and complete. Messages for staff members should be written on the appropriate forms and placed in their mail box. Also, use the "Request for Information" forms to record answers to questions callers will be phoning back for at some specified time.

Recognize service priorities--answer all general information calls which can be answered in a few minutes time. When it is clear that the question being asked will take more than a few minutes to answer, it may be necessary to take into account not only the nature and urgency of the request but also the status of the inquirer as it relates to the University, before proceeding further.

Complicated questions are often better answered if the caller is encouraged to come in person to the library. If this is not possible, a written reply may be preferable to a lengthy telephone conversation.

Outgoing Calls

When placing official calls, always identify yourself as a member of the Reference Department of Olson Library. To dial a University number, dial only the last four digits. To dial a local number, dial "9" and then the complete number.

Long distance calls of a professional nature may be made from the Reference Office. Information about the number called, the person called, city, and reasons for making the call should be recorded on the Long Distance Call form and given to the Reference Secretary.

Normally, librarians should not make long distance calls to answer telephone reference questions. If someone calls long distance with a reference question, and it is not possible to answer the question at that time, the caller should be advised of several options: the person may call back at an agreed-upon time for the answer, or the librarian may make an agreed-upon collect call, or the answer could be sent in writing. Librarians should use their best judgment as to which option is best for answering long-distance inquiries.

H. Library Materials Housed in the Reference Area

Reference materials include Reference books, bibliographies (Z's), college catalogs, telephone books, pamphlets, and microforms. Circulation policies for all these materials except pamphlets are found later in this manual ("Checking Out Reference Materials"). The circulation policy for pamphlets is contained in the Circulation Policies Manual.

Collection development policies for Reference books and bibliographies are contained in the Reference Collection Development Statement.

Telephone books and college catalogs are processed by the Reference Secretary. Normally, old telephone books are discarded as new ones arrive. If Reference librarians want to acquire additional telephone books, they should notify the Reference Secretary.

The basic college catalog collection is in microform. Paper catalogs are kept only for major schools not included in the microform collections. Only the most current editions are maintained.

Pamphlets

The purpose of the pamphlet file is to provide access to current information about specific subjects, and to material seldom available in other formats. Newspaper clippings are not included in the pamphlet file.

Major subject areas to be covered in the pamphlet file are:
- --current tourism information about the U.S. and individual states
- --current issues in the Upper Peninsula
- --tourism information about Michigan and the U.P. in particular
- --current U.P. company annual reports not available elsewhere
- --current information about Northern Michigan University

Acquisition of materials is restricted to solicitation of free materials that meet the above criteria. Materials will be requested from state Chambers of Commerce and tourism departments, U.P. companies, and other organizations which should have pertinent materials. Useful collection tools include the Vertical File Index, Index of Free Materials, and American Libraries.

Materials will be held in the pamphlet box (located in the Reference Office) until they are processed. Processing will be done by the Reference Secretary. Pamphlets will be labeled clearly (written or typed) with the appropriate subject heading. Each will be stamped "NMU LIBRARY", dated, and added to the pamphlet file count. The statistics record is kept in the "Pamphlets and College Catalogs" folder, located in the Reference Office.

If, in the judgment of a Reference Librarian, material acquired for the pamphlet file is suitable for addition to the general collection, the material should be given to the Acquisitions Department as gift material. If government documents are received, they should be given to the Documents Librarian.

The pamphlet file should be kept up to date. Annual publications, such as the tourism files and U.P. company reports, will replace the prior year's. Other materials will be weeded as they become dated. All materials should be reviewed annually. Five years is the typical length of time materials will be retained.

I. Referrals

A reasonable effort must be made to answer every reference question. When the librarian receiving the question has been unable to answer a question satisfactorily after having consulted the known sources, or has reason to believe the question cannot be answered by sources in Olson Library, he/she should refer the user to another source of information.

Reference Librarians should refer users' questions to colleagues in the Library as necessary. When appropriate, the Reference Librarian should notify the colleague in advance, informing the librarian which sources have been consulted or what other actions have been taken.

In referring a user to a colleague in another academic department, library, etc., it is a good idea to call ahead to make sure the colleague can be of assistance.

Incompletely-answered questions, or those for which information does not appear to be available, should be recorded on "Request for Information" forms. The person who received the question originally is responsible for seeing that the question is handled promptly to completion.

J. Assisting Users at the Public Catalog

One of the chief responsibilities of the Reference Department is instruction in the use of the public catalog. Since an understanding of the catalog is a key to self-sufficiency, the librarian on desk duty should

accompany the user to the catalog when a question arises concerning its use. If someone appears to have difficulty at the catalog, ask if help is needed. Each librarian should use judgment in identifying such a situation.

K. Special Reference Collections

Vertical file material is maintained by the Reference Department (usually folders of newspaper clippings on frequently-requested local topics). All Reference Librarians should be sufficiently familiar with the contents and arrangement of the collection to be able to use it readily as a supplementary source of information. Vertical file material will circulate from and be returned to the Information Desk. Vertical file material is available only for use in the Library and does not circulate outside the Library.

Microforms

Reference Assistants will aid users in using microform equipment. They should report all malfunctioning equipment to the Reference Secretary or Circulation Department. They will also be responsible for filing all microforms.

In the absence of a Reference Assistant, Reference Librarians may be called to assist in the Microform Room. When no assistant is available, librarians will also be responsible for filing microforms.

Reference Librarians should report malfunctioning machines to the Reference Secretary, Circulation Department, or Library Office. In addition, a dated note and time should be placed on the machine indicating it is temporarily out of order.

Documents

All Reference staff should receive basic orientation to the Documents collection and its records, and are expected to be able to provide reference service in this area.

When the Documents Desk is unstaffed, Reference Assistants or Librarians will locate requested documents.

When users come to the Information Desk with questions best answered by sources in Documents, they should be given as much help as time permits. If the Documents Librarian is on duty, he/she should be consulted so as to provide the best materials available in as efficient a manner as possible.

PHOTOCOPYING

With the exception of microform photocopying, photocopying is considered a function of the Circulation Department.

Microform photocopying is considered a function of Reference. Library users operate the reader/printers by depositing a quarter for each page. Keys are restricted to the use of library personnel.

Normally, the Reference Department will not make microform copies for a user. However, in certain instances (such as requests from University staff or faculty), the Department may make photocopies from microforms. The cost will be 25¢ per page. Service response time will depend on availability of staff. The Reference Department will notify the user when copies are ready.

If payment is not made at the time of copying, a billing for service will be made to the user or department by the Library Secretary.

A log indicating the number of copies made with the key is kept in the Reference Vertical File under "Photocopying, Microform." A report on the number of copies made each month is given to the Library Secretary.

Copies will not be made in violation of copyright laws.

DATABASE SEARCHING

Olson Library offers online database searching through Computer-Assisted Topic Searching (CATS), in which the Database Librarian performs the search for the patron.

CATS policies and procedures are described in the CATS Manual. Users requesting CATS searches or inquiring about CATS should be referred to the Database Librarian.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC SERVICES

When time and resources are available, the Reference Department may prepare bibliographies when the results of such endeavors will contribute significantly to the work of the department.

Staff members may prepare bibliographies on behalf of individual faculty members or students when the results would contribute significantly to the work of the department. Such bibliographies should be checked with the Head of Public Services before the work is undertaken.

Reference Department staff will provide limited assistance, dependent on time and staff available, in the checking of bibliographies against library holdings. If the lists are long ones, library users will be aided in performing this task for themselves.

OCLC searches are time-consuming inquiries and will be handled accordingly. Only trained personnel should conduct searches after a thorough reference interview has taken place with the user.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AND ORIENTATION

Library instruction policies are described in the Reference Policies Manual.

Orientation activities include: guided tours of the library for freshmen, transfer, international students, and new faculty; preparation of handouts on the physical layout of the library; preparation of nonprint media which complements or offers an alternative to tours and handouts.

Instructional activities include: course-related sessions; preparation of handouts related to the above activity, such as library guides and pathfinders; preparation of nonprint media which complements the instructional program; term-paper counseling and counseling of special groups of users (handicapped, international, and graduate students), and informal individual instruction, such as on-the-spot explanation of the use of indexes or abstracts.

All Reference Librarians should be sufficiently familiar with the library and its policies to present a general library orientation session on short notice.

Instructors seeking course-related instruction should be encouraged to schedule such instruction at least one week in advance, if possible.

The Library Instruction Librarian will assign a Reference Librarian to teach a class, depending on the Reference schedule and the speciality of the librarian.

The Library Instruction Librarian will tabulate orientation and instruction statistics at the end of each month, in preparation for the Reference annual report.

Except under special circumstances, library instruction sessions will be conducted in the Library Classroom (LRC 235A). Tours to support the instruction should normally be conducted during the last portion of the session. In order that tours be as non-disruptive as possible, necessary instruction and discussion should take place in the classroom.

Reference handouts, flyers, and pathfinders should be as current as possible. Individual librarians may on their own update an existing flyer and give the revised version to the Reference Secretary for preparation. The Library Instruction Librarian may also request individual Reference Librarians to update older flyers; normally these will relate to the librarian's liaison area or to a topic for which the particular librarian has special expertise. Suggestions for new flyers and pathfinders should be given to the Head of Public Services for review.

COMPACT DISC (CD-ROM)

The Library acquires compact disc (CD-ROM) versions of selected databases when possible. These are considered Reference materials.

Reference is responsible for developing appropriate guides, handouts, etc. for particular CD-ROM databases, to assist users in searching the databases. Every effort should be made to keep these as simple and direct as possible.

Often, demonstrations of CD-ROM are appropriate for library instruction sessions. Depending on class size, these demonstrations may or may not be conducted in the Library classroom (LRC 235A). If demonstrations will be held in the classroom, the librarian who will give the demonstration is responsible for seeing that the appropriate equipment is set up in the classroom. The librarian is also responsible for contacting the Audio-Visual department of Learning Resources to reserve the DataShow for the demonstration. The Reference Secretary or Reference Assistants may be asked to assist in setting up the required equipment. Librarians who plan to demonstrate CD-ROM in the classroom should fill in the name and time of the class on the "CD-ROM Demonstration" form in the Reference Updates folder.

CD-ROM users will sometimes approach a librarian on desk duty and ask for assistance in planning or completing a CD-ROM search. If, in the judgment of the librarian, such assistance will require extended absence from the Information Desk, the request should be considered as similar to other more complicated, time-consuming research questions which can arise at the desk. The librarian on desk duty should in such instances choose from several options, including alerting an "on call" librarian to take his/her place at the desk, asking an "on call" librarian to assist the user, or informing the user that if he/she is willing to come back later, individual help in performing the CD-ROM search will be provided.

TERM PAPER COUNSELING

For two weeks during each regular semester (Fall, Winter) and throughout the Spring and Summer, the Reference Department offers Term Paper Counseling (TPC). When the service is available, students will sign up for a one-on-one session with a Reference Librarian for more extensive assistance on a research topic. TPCs are scheduled between 8:30 and 5:00 Monday-Friday and are not available during evenings or on weekends except by special arrangement.

Sign-up forms for TPCs are available at the Information Desk. On this form students indicate the topic they are researching, where they have already looked for information, and their general familiarity with Olson Library. Based on this form, a librarian assigned to the TPC will prepare a second form listing, where appropriate, relevant subject headings from the public catalog, relevant indexes and abstracts with useful headings, plus any additional library sources that relate to the topic (including documents, bibliographies, reference books, handouts, etc.). The librarian will also provide the student with sample relevant materials; the number of such items will be determined by the individual librarian.

When a student arrives for his/her TPC, the librarian should, using the prepared form, demonstrate use of the relevant library finding tools (e.g. public catalog, indexes). No set time length is established for TPCs, since the time for an individual session will vary depending on the topic. Students should always be encouraged to return to the Information Desk if additional assistance is necessary.

When a student comes to the Information Desk to register for a TPC, the librarian on desk duty may assume responsibility for the TPC and schedule the session, or the librarian may give the completed form to the Library Instruction Librarian, who will arrange for a particular librarian to do the TPC. In all cases the student's name, topic, date, and name of the librarian doing the TPC should be recorded on the small desk calendar in the Reference Office. In addition, the student form should be given to the Reference Secretary, who will record the name, address, phone number, and topic for each TPC.

Besides TPCs, the Reference Department offers similar one-on-one sessions for graduate students, handicapped students, and international students. Forms for these sessions are available at the Information Desk. The procedures for these sessions are the same as those for TPCs.

REFERENCE CORRESPONDENCE

Incoming inquiries to the Reference Department are referred to an appropriately-qualified librarian for reply. A letter replying to a reference question is signed by the librarian answering the inquiry.

The Reference Department will attempt to answer letters as fully as possible. Replies should be sent no later than one week after receipt. When suitable, the inquirer should be invited to come and use the library in person, in the event that there is neither staff nor time to answer the inquiry fully.

Letters requesting information about the library will be referred to the appropriate librarian for reply. A copy of any completed questionnaire relating to the Reference Department will be filed in the Reference Office.

The Reference Department will not normally supply more than three free pages of photocopied material as part of a reply to a reference question. If more copying is necessary, bibliographic information about the source should be supplied to the inquirer, with the suggestion that the material be requested through interlibrary loan or used by the inquirer in the library.

REFERENCE SCHEDULE

The Reference schedule will be established by the Head of Public Services, in consultation with the Reference Librarians and staff, and will be reviewed and approved by the Library Director.

When possible, Reference Assistants are scheduled during heavy use hours, evenings, weekends, and early mornings (for room pick-up).

Should it be necessary for a Reference Librarian to miss scheduled work, he/she should arrange with another librarian to exchange hours. If this is not possible, he/she should confer with the Head of Public Serviess. The Head of Public Services and the Reference Secretary should be notified of any schedule changes.

In case of illness, the Head of Public Services and Reference Secretary should be notified as soon as possible.

EVALUATION OF REFERENCE SERVICES

Observing and working in the Reference Department is a good method of determining the effectiveness of Reference services:

--are library users finding information and materials they need?

--are reference materials being used?

--do users express satisfaction with services?

--do faculty recommend the use of reference services and materials?

--do students recommend the use of reference services and materials?

In addition to observation, the Reference staff should be alert to other methods of evaluating reference services. User surveys may be useful. Staff should also be aware of user complaints or requests for materials that the library does not have.

Reference staff should strive to improve reference services by being receptive to suggestions for improving services from library users and other staff; by attending conferences and workshops; by visiting other university reference departments; and by reading professional literature.

CHECKING OUT REFERENCE MATERIALS

The following materials circulate only according to the policy enumerated here: reference books in the Reference Collection, non-circulating Z's, maps (other than state and city road maps), atlases, telephone directories, college catalogs, and microforms.

Only NMU faculty and fulltime staff may borrow these materials. The lending period will vary and will be determined in each case by a Reference Librarian, after consultation with the borrower. Preferably Reference materials should circulate only for an hour or two. Ready Reference materials do not circulate.

The Reference Librarian on desk duty will fill out a card for each Reference item checked out, noting the call number, title, name and University affiliation of the borrower, and due date. An orange slip, dated and initialed by the librarian, shall be inserted into the item. The borrower should be directed to the Circulation Desk so the item can be desensitized. Borrowers should also be directed to return borrowed Reference materials to Circulation.

When Reference materials have not been returned by the agreed-upon date, Circulation should be notified so that overdue notices can be sent.

Patrons who inquire at the Information Desk about checking out any non-Reference materials should be directed to the Circulation Desk.

LIBRARY CLASSROOM (LRC 235A)

When LRC 235A is not required for Library Science or library instruction classes, it may be used by NMU faculty, students, and staff for seminars or committee meetings. LRC 235A may only be scheduled for University-related matters. Except for classes taught by librarians, no group or class may schedule the room for an entire semester.

LRC 235A may be reserved by calling the Reference Department or by coming to the Information Desk. Arrangements for audiovisual equipment must be made through the Learning Resources Department by those requiring its use. No smoking, eating, or drinking is permitted. Furniture may be moved only if it is returned to its original place.

ORDERING REFERENCE MATERIALS

Any Reference Librarian may request a new or replacement Reference book. All such requests should be given to the librarian with responsibility for the Reference Collection, who will submit the requests to Acquisitions.

Below is a sample order card filled out as Acquisitions prefers:

LIST PRICE 19.95

HAVE CALL NUMBER
Ref
ML
3795
B33
1979

ADDED COP
(ADDED ED)
ADDED VOL
REPLACE

AUTHOR Baskerville, David
(LAST NAME FIRST) OR RESPONSIBLE AGENCY
TITLE music business handbook and career guide
SERIES
EDITION 4th ed. or latest VOLS.
ISBN# 0-933056-04-4 LC# 85-50?
PLACE & PUBLISHER Sherwood YEAR 1985 or latest
RECOMMENDED BY RH DEPT.
APPROVED BY DATE Oct. 8, 8?
DONATED BY
SOURCE OF INFORMATION – BTP

PLEASE ATTACH ANY PRINTED INFORMATION SUCH AS PUBLISHER'S AD'S TO THIS FORI

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Interlibrary Loan is a function of Circulation; however, ILL forms will be available at the Information Desk, and Reference Librarians are encouraged to provide guidance to users completing ILL forms.

Users should be urged especially to provide a complete citation for the item requested, to indicate whether they are willing to pay for the item, to indicate the source of the citation, and to sign the form(s). Users should then be directed to take the completed requests to the Circulation Desk.

COURTESY CARDS

Any adult (19 or older) resident of the Upper Peninsula may apply for an Olson Library Courtesy Card, which enables the holder to check out regular library materials. Courtesy cards are a function of Circulation, and interested library users should be referred to Circulation for additional information.

Courtesy card holders may not check out Reference materials.

Olson Library
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

DOOR ALARM

If a door alarm rings (which sounds quite different from the fire alarm), the senior full-time staff member on duty in Circulation will call the janitor who will take care of the problem.

FIRE ALARM

When a fire alarm sounds, the senior full-time staff member on duty in Circulation will do the following:

1. Call Public Safety at the emergency number 1234 - immediately. Inform Public Safety if any handicapped people are known to be in the building.

2. Drop theater ropes at the exit.

3. If other staff are available, ask for one or more to aid in clearing the Library, to direct people out of the Library at the exit, and to ensure that people who have left the building are well away from the exit doors. Keep people out of the building until the all-clear has been given.

4. Go around to all areas of both floors to make sure that all persons are evacuated from the building. Handicapped people on the upper floor should be directed to the nearest safe stairwell and told that Public Safety officers will evacuate them.

5. When Public Safety officers arrive, follow their instructions.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Should it appear that someone is in need of medical attention, do the following:

1. If it appears to be less than a life-threatening emergency (broken leg, e.g.), call the Campus Emergency number at 1234. Be prepared to report all you can about the injury or illness and the exact location of the person.

2. If it is life threatening or if there is any doubt, call the ambulance directly at 9-475-9911; then call Campus Emergency at 1234.

3. If the person is having trouble breathing, loosen his/her shirt, tie, belt, etc. Do not attempt to move the person.

4. Keep a crowd from gathering so that the person can get plenty of air and so that emergency personnel can gain easy access to the person.

5. Do whatever the Medical or Public Safety personnel ask you to do.

BOMB THREAT AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

If a bomb threat is received, call Campus Emergency at 1234 immediately and follow their instructions.

PATRON PROBLEM

1. If a patron becomes verbally abusive toward you, remain calm and do not attempt to retaliate; rather in a calm tone of voice, attempt to explain the library policy or whatever is causing the problem. If this is not sufficient, call on the immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is not there, call upon the Head of Public Services or the Director. If he/she cannot handle the person -- or is not available -- and there is a clear threat of physical violence to persons or property, Public Safety (2151) should be called. If no one is there to assist, and a call to Public Safety seems unwarranted, simply do your best and gather what information you can to report to your supervisor.

2. If a person appears to be bothering another patron, verify with the patron whether he/she is indeed being bothered. If so, ask the person to desist or leave. If the person refuses, follow the procedure above (1).

3. If a person appears to be destoying or damaging Library property, please follow the procedure above (1).

POWER FAILURE

If there is a power failure, the Library's battery-powered emergency lights should come on to permit people to find their way around or out to the exit. The senior full-time staff member on duty in Circulation will do the following:

1. Call Public Safety at 1234 to report the incident. Ask when power may be restored or ask them to call back with this information.

2. Stay at the exit to check Library materials as people leave. The detection system is not working when the power is off.

3. If other staff are available, please give one or two of them flashlights and ask them to check both floors of the Library for people requiring assistance.

4. If the power outage appears to be lengthy, consult with the Head of Public Services or Director for further guidance.

OLSON LIBRARY
NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

REFERENCE POLICIES MANUAL

Prepared by
John F. Berens
Head of Public Services

FEBRUARY 1988

IR05 2367

INTRODUCTION

This Reference Policies Manual contains policies for providing reference services and maintaining the Reference Collection. The manual is to be used for orienting new Reference staff members as well as for answering questions on departmental policies. The manual may be made available to any library user who has a question about any Reference policy.

The contents of this manual will be reviewed periodically by the Reference staff and the Head of Public Services to insure that policy and practice are in conformity and that needed changes are made.

The Reference Department has two fundamental goals: (1) to facilitate access to library collections and to the informational content of these collections through direct personal service to the library's users, and (2) to support the University's instructional program through providing formal and informal library instruction.

As an integral part of the University, the basic function of the Reference Department is to teach users how to use the library as independent library researchers. Aside from "ready reference" questions, this means that the Reference staff will provide guidance in pursuit of information rather than providing the information itself. The individual Reference Librarian should exercise judgment in determining the applicability of this policy in specific situations.

The needs of library users must always be taken seriously and treated with the utmost respect. Under no circumstances should there be any discussion of an individual or group of users, or any transactions between user and Reference Librarian, outside of a professional context.

HOURS AND SCOPE OF SERVICE

Professional reference service will be provided during these hours during the regular semesters (Fall, Winter):

Sunday	1:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Monday-Thursday	8:00 am - 10:00 pm
Friday	8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday	10:00 am - 6:00 pm

During the Spring and Summer months (May-August), professional reference service will be provided Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Reference Assistants will provide service on evenings and weekends during Spring and Summer.

These hours may be modified in the future depending on staff availability and other considerations.

LIBRARY USERS

Categories of library users include students, faculty and staff, and non-University users.

No discrimination is made between University and non-University users when giving routine reference services. In the case of a time-consuming inquiry or in the case of special services, the question of a user's affiliation may arise and some distinctions may have to be made. The Reference Librarian should use his/her own judgment in such situations, although senior staff members may be consulted.

As a general rule, a library user with a time-consuming inquiry who is not affiliated with Northern Michigan University should be referred, whenever possible, to a library intended to serve the user's needs.

REFERENCE PRIORITIES

The Reference Department gives priority to all activities involving direct services to library users.

As a general rule, service to library users who come to the Information Desk takes priority over other activities.

All Reference Librarians on duty, even though they are not scheduled at the desk, are on call whenever their help to library users is needed.

A user who comes to the Information Desk takes priority over a person who calls on the telephone or who has left an inquiry at the desk.

In cases where there are two or more library users waiting, help should be offered first to the user who has been waiting the longest. If it appears that the answer to the inquiry will take some time, the librarian may deal first with the questions which can be answered immediately, if this is agreeable to the persons waiting.

If the immediate needs of users who are in the library or who are telephoning are adequately being taken care of, next priority should be accorded to following up inquiries not answered when they were taken. All such questions must be dealt with immediately by the librarian who accepted them, unless other arrangements have been made, or service to users who are waiting interferes.

Library instruction has the second major priority among tasks performed by Reference Librarians. Reference Librarians are expected to be available when they are not assisting individual users. This assistance may take the form of actual instruction or the preparation of materials for instructional purposes.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

Olson Library's library instruction program has as its main goal the development of self-reliant library users. Self-reliant library users can conceptualize the type and scope of information needed to address a problem, envision the steps required to obtain that information, determine appropriate sources to supply that information, and critically evaluate located information. Library instruction is presented in a variety of formats and methodologies, but all support the goal of developing self-reliant, independent library users.

Library instruction promotes the following program objectives:

--identification of the library as a primary source of information

--identification of librarians as information facilitators.

--knowledge of the location of major units within the library (e.g., Circulation, Reference, Periodicals, Documents, CATS).

--ability to use basic catalogs (e.g. public catalog, periodicals list) to locate specific library holdings.

--familiarity with basic reference sources in general.

--familiarity with specific reference sources in an individual's area of major concentration.

--knowledge of how information is organized in specific disciplines/areas of concentration and the basic reference/access tools to this information.

--planning and implementation of basic search strategy. This includes defining types of information needed for particular assignments/problems, determining steps necessary to obtain this information; locating and using sources that will yield this information; and applying search strategy across the disciplines.

--critical selection and evaluation of materials located through search strategy.

Library instruction at Olson Library encompasses a wide variety of formats and methodologies, including:

--basic orientation to inform users of library resources and services. This usually takes the form of orientation tours (directed or self-guided).

--course-related library instruction, in which librarians work with faculty to present information and strategy related to specific course assignments requiring use of library materials.

--Information Desk service, which is often an extension of course-related library instruction. All Reference librarians need to be aware of ongoing library instruction assignments.

--individual (one-on-one) counseling sessions, in which Reference librarians provide assistance to users working on specific research projects. These include term paper counseling and counseling of graduate, handicapped, and international students.

--preparation and dissemination of handouts, pathfinders, and guides that support course-related library instruction. These handouts can either outline basic information sources in a particular discipline or support search strategy for a particular topic.

--workshops and seminars for faculty and staff.

--community outreach to area high schools and community groups.

--point-of-use instruction for specific indexes, abstracts, and reference tools.

REQUESTS FOR OFF-CAMPUS LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

From time to time the Reference Department receives requests from NMU instructors to provide library instruction off-campus. When this occurs, the instructor should be informed that the Reference staff cannot provide off-campus library instruction. The instructor should be urged to schedule an on-campus library instruction session.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

The Reference Department frequently receives requests for library instruction from instructors at Upper Peninsula high schools. Such requests usually have several purposes. High school instructors who teach college-bound students are interested in introducing a university library and its many resources to their students. Usually, students have assignments which require direct use of Olson Library resources (card catalog and periodical indexes). Since library instruction for high school classes can be a positive outreach to potential NMU students, the Reference Department considers such library instruction proper. However, in order that library instruction for high school classes be as meaningful as possible and in order to minimize conflict with use of library resources by current NMU students, certain guidelines are helpful.

The best times for high school classes to visit the library are during the week of Spring Break or during May and June. Whenever possible, library instruction sessions for high school students should be scheduled during these times. If this is not possible, every effort should be made to minimize potential conflict with ongoing use of the library by regular NMU students.

As with other types of library instruction, library instruction for high school classes works best when the students have a specific assignment requiring use of library resources. High school instructors are encouraged to provide the Reference Department with a copy of the assignment and any relevant lists of topics prior to the visit.

Occasionally high school classes appear unannounced and ask for a library tour. When this happens the Reference Department will make every effort to provide the requested tour. Following the visit, the instructor should be contacted (by letter) and advised that the visit would have been more meaningful to the students if they had had a specific assignment and if the Reference Department had received prior notice of the planned visit.

Whenever possible, the Reference Department should urge high school instructors to first utilize all resources of their own high school library before scheduling a library instruction session at Olson Library. Instructors, working with their school librarian, should prior to the visit prepare their students in the use of the card catalog and any available indexes, such as the Readers' Guide. If possible, there should be one high school teacher present for every 25 students.

THE REFERENCE COLLECTION

The materials in the Reference Collection support the curricula and programs of Northern Michigan University.

The Reference Department does not designate an absolute limit on the size of the Reference Collection. However, prevailing demand, changes in the curriculum, and student enrollment figures in various disciplines serve as guidelines to the relative growth rates of subject areas within the collection. Approximately 7,500 books make up this collection.

Types of materials included in the Reference Collection and criteria for their selection, evaluation, and deselection are contained in the Reference Collection Development Policy Statement.